

Community Participation in Contaminated Sediments Remediation: Effective Public Involvement in the Decision-Making Process

Commencement Bay Nearshore & Tidelands Superfund Problem Area

EPA Forum on Managing Contaminated Sediments at Hazardous
Waste Sites

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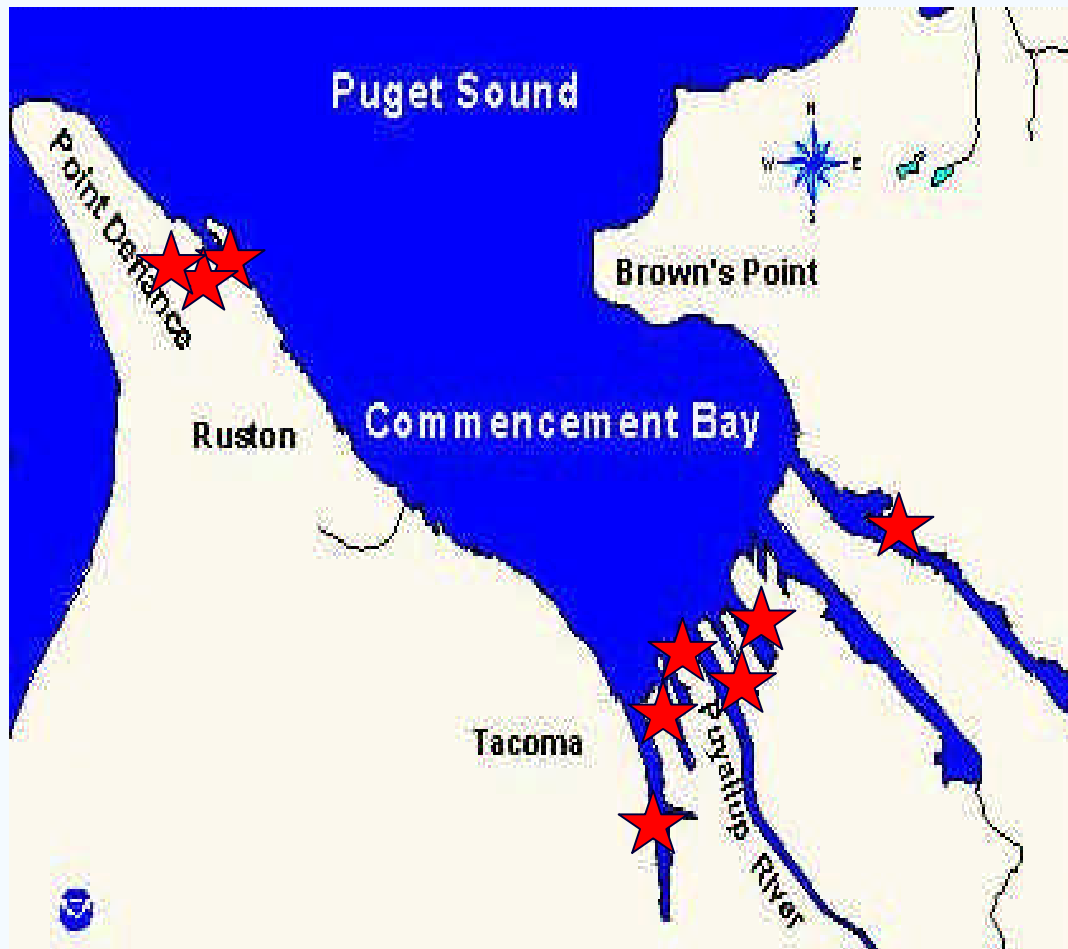
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Citizens for a Healthy Bay (CHB)

- Founded in 1990 to provide community oversight into the Superfund remedial action.
- Over 1,000 members representing the Commencement Bay community and south Puget Sound.
- Works cooperatively with all stakeholders:
 - Communities, neighborhoods and other public stakeholders
 - Potentially responsible parties
 - Economic development and other business interests
 - Local, regional, state and federal agencies



Commencement Bay Problem Area



- 150 PRPs
- 70 Chemicals of Concern
- 3 million cubic yards over 9 distinct problem areas
- 2 cleanups completed to date

CHB's Role in the Cleanup Process

- **Provide** citizen oversight in the cleanup process
- **Advocate** for permanent and protective cleanup and disposal solutions
- **Analyze** and comment on all remedial and design plans
- **Educate** the community regarding cleanup activities and issues
- **Expand** citizen participation in public meetings and comment periods

The Public Involvement Experience in Commencement Bay

- **Successful -- St. Paul Waterway Cap**
- **Unsuccessful -- Mouth of Hylebos CAD**
- **What can we learn from these and other public involvement experiences?**

St. Paul Waterway Cap Site -- Process

- Actively engaged the community at the beginning of the process.
- Invited the community to partner in the remedial action.
- Listened to the public's concerns and responded appropriately.
- Regularly updated and informed community, even when no change.

St. Paul Waterway Cap Site -- Outcome

- Community owned a stake in the outcome and advocated for its completion.
- Achieved quick & successful cleanup.
- All stakeholders gained.
- Partial delisting from NPL.
- Once dead zone returned to diverse, thriving aquatic community.

Mouth of Hylebos CAD Site -- Process

- Community learned of project by accident.
- Perceived their concerns and issues were not seriously considered.
- Insufficient studies to address community's questions.
- Adversarial and contentious.

Mouth of Hylebos CAD Site -- Outcome

- Overwhelming public opposition to project.
- “Battle” lines drawn = winners and losers.
- Atmosphere of anger, distrust and inflexibility.
- Delay of one year.
- Loss of community support to involved businesses.

What can we learn?

- Community is a **primary** stakeholder in **all** sediment remediation actions.
- As a **stakeholder**, the Community **must** be at the table **early** in the discussion process.
- Acknowledge **validity** of public perspective:
 - effective **two-way** communication
 - minimize **'techno-speak'** and **jargon**

What can we Learn?

- Community **must be part of team** working to remedy the problem.
- **All** community concerns and issues **must** be considered and addressed at some level.
- **Communication** and **integrated participation** are keys to success.

Effective Public Involvement

**Working in partnership with
the community to achieve a
common goal.**